Record Nr. UNINA9910459727303321 Titolo Rethinking emotion: interiority and exteriority in premodern, modern and contemporary thought / / edited by Rudiger Campe and Julia Weber Berlin:,: De Gruyter,, [2014] Pubbl/distr/stampa ©2014 3-11-037336-X **ISBN** 3-11-025925-7 Descrizione fisica 1 online resource (390 p.) Interdisciplinary German cultural studies, , 1861-8030 ; ; volume15 Collana Classificazione CC 6600 302 Disciplina Soggetti Emotions - Sociological aspects Sociology - Germany - History Electronic books. Germany Civilization Lingua di pubblicazione Inglese **Formato** Materiale a stampa Livello bibliografico Monografia Note generali Description based upon print version of record. Nota di bibliografia Includes bibliographical references. Nota di contenuto Front matter -- Contents -- Rethinking Emotion: Moving beyond Interiority / Campe, Rüdiger / Weber, Julia -- I. Modes of Interiorization: Emotion before the Great Dichotomy -- From Moving the Soul to Moving into the Soul / Newmark, Catherine -- Presenting the Affect The Scene of Pathos in Aristotle's Rhetoric and Its Revision in Descartes's Passions of the Soul / Campe, Rüdiger -- The Art of Prayer Conversions of Interiority and Exteriority in Medieval Contemplative Practice / Largier, Niklaus -- Contact at a Distance The Topology of Fascination / Weingart, Brigitte -- Chardin: Inwardness - Emotion -Communication / Söntgen, Beate -- II. Interiority/Exteriority: Thinking and Writing Emotion -- "... that until now, the inner world of man has been given ... such unimaginative treatment" Constructions of Interiority around 1800 / Greiner, Bernhard -- Inside/Out Mediating Interiority in E. T. A. Hoffmann's Rat Krespel / Weber, Julia -- Keller's Cellar Vaults Intrusions of the Real in Gottfried Keller's Realism / Nägele, Rainer -- Toward a Genealogy of the Internalized Human Being

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Sommario/riassunto

What are emotions, where do they originate and how are they brought into being? While from antiquity to early modernity, affects or passions were mostly conceived of as external physiological forces which act upon a passive subject, modern conceptions generally locate emotions within the subject. Drawing on the dichotomy of "interiority / exteriority" as a complex interdependent relationship, they mostly envision emotions as interior processes. Contemporary conceptions of emotion from such different fields as human geography, art history and cognitive sciences recently started to challenge this notion of internal emotions by developing alternative descriptions of externalized emotion. This book reevaluates premodern, modern and contemporary conceptions of affects, passions and emotion by analyzing various historical manifestations of the discourse on emotion. Unlike most previous research, which - especially in the German tradition - often focused exclusively on the rise of the modern (Romantic) interiority without paying attention to the underlying dichotomy of "interiority / exteriority", this study aims to explore the historical preconditions, the internal logic and the possible shortcomings that inform our thinking on emotion.